

**IN THE CLAIMS**

1-20. (Cancelled)

21. (currently amended) An artificial intervertebral ~~spacer~~  
disc comprising:

a spacer body, having a first exterior surface and a second exterior surface, at least one of said first exterior surface and said second exterior surface adapted for engaging a vertebral body, at least one of said first exterior surface and said second exterior surface having a groove disposed therein; and

a vertebral body contact element having a perimeter and a central portion, wherein ~~at least a portion of~~ only said perimeter of said vertebral body contact element is disposed within said groove to thereby aid in securely attaching said vertebral body contact element to said first exterior surface or said second exterior surface; and

a coating being disposed within said groove and ~~about~~  
~~said at least a portion of~~ being in contact with only said perimeter of said vertebral body contact element, said coating attaching said vertebral body contact element to said first or second exterior surface.

22. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 21, wherein the vertebral body contact element includes a wire mesh having a resting shape of a dome convexly extending from the spacer body such that a gap is formed between said central portion of said vertebral body contact element and said first or second exterior surfaces.

23. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 22, wherein the vertebral body contact element has a

convexity depth approximating a concavity depth of a concave surface of a vertebral body.

24. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 22, wherein the vertebral body contact element has a footprint approximating a footprint of a concave surface of a vertebral body.

25. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 22, wherein the coating is a plasma spray.

26. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 22, further comprising an osteoconductive feature adjacent said wire mesh.

27. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 26, wherein said coating includes said osteoconductive feature.

28. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 21, wherein the vertebral body contact element has a resting shape of a dome convexly extending from the spacer body.

29. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 21, further comprising an osteoconductive feature adjacent the vertebral body contact element.

30. (previously presented) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 29, wherein said coating includes said osteoconductive feature.

31-40. (cancelled)

41. (new) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 21, wherein said central portion of said vertebral body contact element is spaced from said first or second exterior surface.

42. (new) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 21, wherein said central portion of said vertebral body contact element is devoid of said coating.

43. (new) An artificial intervertebral disc comprising:

a spacer body having a first exterior surface and a second exterior surface, wherein one of said first and second exterior surfaces has a groove formed therein; and

a vertebral body contact element having a perimeter and a central portion, wherein only said perimeter of said vertebral body contact element is disposed within said groove for securing said vertebral body contact element to the one of said first and second exterior surfaces.

44. (new) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 43, further comprising a coating disposed only within said groove for attaching said vertebral body contact element to the one of said first and second exterior surfaces

45. (new) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 44, wherein said central portion of said vertebral body contact element is devoid of said coating.

46. (new) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 43, further comprising a coating disposed only within said groove and over said perimeter of said vertebral body contact element that is disposed within said groove.

47. (new) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 43, wherein said vertebral body contact element includes a wire mesh having a resting shape of a dome convexly extending from said spacer body such that a gap is formed between said central portion of said vertebral body contact element and the one of said first and second exterior surfaces.